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Viet Air Role Continues Unabated, Report Says

Reuters News Agency
 ITHACA, NEW YORK — A research report on U.S. bombing in Indochina, published here Monday, said the air war is not being wound down like the ground war, and that by the end of this year the Nixon administration will have dropped as much bomb tonnage in three years as the Johnson administration did in five.

The study was undertaken by 20 researchers at Cornell University. It was sponsored partly by the Peace Studies Program of the university's center for international studies, and partly by a private foundation.

A summary of the report said: "the data revealed that, contrary to reports and impressions, the air war in Indochina is not being wound down like the ground war. As U.S. troops are withdrawn massive aerial firepower remains to substitute for manpower. The administration's policy of withdrawal without political compromise leaves it still boxed in by the enemy's military initiatives; The only response available is massive retaliation from the air."

As Much Bombing

It added that in 1971 "as much bombing is being done in Indochina, which is about the size of Texas, as was done in all theaters in World War II."

"In the first eight months of this year, over half a million tons of air-dropped munitions were used, 17 times the total amount used by the British in

ten years of successful counter-insurgency in Malaya. By the end of this year the Nixon administration will have deployed in three years as much bomb tonnage as the Johnson administration did in five."

The study, based on interviews with over 80 experts and co-ordinated by physics professor Raphael Littauer, said that in South Vietnam alone the U.S. has already dropped 3.6 million tons of bombs, almost four times as much as it used in the Korean War.

No Results

It said bombing of North Vietnam between 1965 and 1968 failed to yield significant results. The survey cited economic damage totaling about \$500 million and up to 100,000 casualties, 80 percent of them civilians, but added that studies by the Central Intelligence Agency and Defense Department showed no measurable reduction in North Vietnam's will or capacity for contributing to the war in the south.

The survey said the air war over the Ho Chi Minh trail in southern Laos has been escalating steadily since 1966, with 400,000 tons of bombs dropped this year. It added that this has become the focus of the U.S. air war in Indochina, and has also served as a laboratory for the improvement of air war technology.

The summary of the study said: "The credibility of U.S. government statements about the air war is called into question by numerous discrepancies . . .

"In 1969, when 200,000 tons of bombs were dumped on northern Laos, Washington officially admitted only to flying reconnaissance missions. B-52 raids in northern Laos went on for more than a year before official acknowledgement.

"It was stated that U.S. planes were not giving close support to Cambodian troops when in fact they were. Protective reaction raids against North Vietnam strike a wider range of targets than their official description implies."